unit (CPU) **30** (such as a microprocessor or microcontroller). To provide the gaming functions, the CPU **30** executes a game program that allows for the randomly selected outcome. The CPU **30** is also coupled to or includes a local memory **32**. The local memory **32** may comprise a volatile memory **33** (e.g., a random-access memory (RAM)) and a non-volatile memory **34** (e.g., an EEPROM). It should be appreciated that the CPU **30** may include one or more microprocessors. Similarly, the local memory **32** may include multiple RAM and multiple program memories.

[**0029**] Communications between the peripheral components of the gaming terminal **10** and the CPU **30** occur through input/output (I/O) circuits **35***a*. As such, the CPU **30** also controls and receives inputs from the peripheral components of the gaming terminal **10**. Further, the CPU **30** communicates with external systems via the I/O circuits **35***b*. Although the I/O circuits **35** may be shown as a single block, it should be appreciated that the I/O circuits **35** may include a number of different types of I/O circuits.

[**0030**] In some embodiments, the CPU **30** may not be inside the gaming terminal **10**. Instead, the CPU **30** may be part of a game network **50** (**FIG. 2**) and may be used to control numerous gaming terminals **10**. In these embodiments, the CPU **30** will run the basic games for each of the gaming terminals **10**, and may also be used to link the gaming terminals **10** together. The game network **50** can include progressive jackpots that are contributed to by all or some of the gaming terminals **10** in the network (e.g., terminal-level jackpots that only each terminal **10** contributes to, bank-level jackpots that are contributed to by all of the terminals **10** in a particular bank, and wide-area jackpots that are contributed to by a larger number of terminals **10**, such as multiple banks). Alternatively, the game network **50** can allow the player to retrieve assets obtained while playing one terminal **10** at a different gaming terminal that is also part of the game network. Assets may be any number of things, including, but not limited to, monetary or non-monetary awards, features that a player builds up in a bonus or progressive game to win awards, etc.

[**0031**] In some embodiments, the CPU **30** is also used with the information reader **24** to restore saved assets. For example, in one embodiment, the information reader **24** is adapted to receive and distribute tickets. The tickets each include a unique identifier. The unique identifier links the ticket to a file contained within the local memory **32** or a system memory **52** located in the game network **50**. The file includes the assets that are being stored from a previous game. Monetary awards include game credits or money, while the non-monetary awards can be free plays (e.g., free spins), multipliers, or access to bonus and/or progressive games.

[**0032**] When a player inserts a ticket into the information reader **24**, the CPU **30** obtains the unique identifier and causes the appropriate memory **32**, **52** to be searched, and the file containing the unique identifier matching the identifier on the ticket is retrieved. Any assets or other information contained in this file are then transmitted to the gaming terminal **10**, and the player regains any assets that were saved during a previous game. This allows the player to keep assets even after a particular gaming session ends, which increases player commitment to a game and decreases vulturing (and possibly even ends it).

[**0033**] In other embodiments, the information reader **24** may include a card reader, and the unique identifier provided at the gaming terminal **10** may be stored on a personal identification card, such as one described above. Or, the gaming terminal **10** includes a radio frequency identification device (RFID) transceiver or receiver so that an RFID transponder held by the player can be used to provide the unique identifier of the player at the gaming terminal **10** without the need to insert a card into the gaming terminal **10**. RFID components can be those available from Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (under the United States Department of Energy) of Richland, Wash.

[**0034**] In other embodiments, the information reader **24** may include a biometric reader, such as a finger, hand, or retina scanner, and the unique identifier may be the scanned biometric information. Additional information regarding biometric scanning, such as fingerprint scanning or hand geometry scanning, is available from International Biometric Group LLC of New York, N.Y. Other biometric identification techniques can be used as well for providing a unique identifier of the player. For example, a microphone can be used in a biometric identification device on the gaming terminal so that the player can be recognized using a voice recognition system.

[**0035**] In other embodiments, the player may simply have to enter in a unique identification code and password into the gaming terminal **10**. In these embodiments, the player would not have to insert a physical object (such as a card or ticket) into the gaming terminal, but would instead use the information reader as an input device, such as a keyboard.

[**0036**] In summary, there are many techniques in which to provide a unique identifier for the player so that the assets accumulated by the player during one wagering session can be stored in either the system or local memory **52**, **32**, thereby allowing the player to subsequently access those assets at the same gaming terminal **10** or a different gaming terminal within the network **50**. Various assets related to the wagering game features and formats can be stored after one gaming session and used in a subsequent gaming session(s) to enhance the gaming experience for the player.

[**0037**] **FIG. 3** is a functional block diagram of a plurality of gaming terminals **10***a*, **10***b*, . . . **10***n* and an optional peripheral **11** according to the present invention linked to a network **40** that is connected to a server **50**. In the embodiment shown, the gaming terminals **10***a*, **10***b*, . . . **10***n* and peripheral **11** are linked together in a parallel configuration, but in other embodiments, they are linked together in a peer-to-peer configuration. Each gaming terminal **10***a*, **10***b*, . . . **10***n* and peripheral **11** shown in **FIG. 3** may be configured as the gaming terminal **10** shown and described in connection with **FIGS. 1 and 2**. Although three gaming terminals are shown, in other embodiments, two or more than three gaming terminals may be networked together, or a stand-alone gaming terminal may be provided.

[**0038**] By networking the gaming terminals **10***a,b,n* and peripheral **11** together, the server **50** can monitor and modify aspects of the game(s) being played on each gaming terminal. For example, in various embodiments, game or top-box software can be downloaded from the server **50** to the gaming terminal **10***a* or game or top-box software may be executed on the server **50** and displayed on the gaming terminal **10***a*.